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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

108

16 March 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Allan Evans (OIR)  
Colonel Paul S. Reinecke, USA (G-2)  
Captain B. E. Wiggin, USN (ONI)  
Colonel Willis B. Sawyer, USAF (AFOIN-2B2)  
Colonel Floyd E. Dunn, USA (JIG)

SUBJECT : NIE 11-6-55: Probable Warning of Soviet Attack  
on the US Through Mid-1958

1. The attached terms of reference, indicating the allocations of production responsibility, were agreed on at the meeting of the IAC representatives on Wednesday, 16 March.

2. It is requested that contributions be received in this office by the close of business on Friday, 8 April.

*Paul A. Borel*  
PAUL A. BOREL  
Deputy Assistant Director  
National Estimates

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## THE PROBLEM

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particular, we should re-examine whether the various major types of initial attacks covered in NIE 11-8-54 are actually the most feasible ones from the standpoint of probable Soviet strategy. A revised estimate is required in any case to take account of any significant changes in the estimate of Soviet gross capabilities for attack which will appear in NIE 11-7-55. The following terms of reference call attention to some points meriting review and suggest some problems which the Board feels deserve fuller consideration. All sources of intelligence should be used.

QUESTIONS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

- I. Review and suggest desired changes in Section I (Paras. 10-16) of NIE 11-8-54. Note particularly the judgments made in the final sentence of Para. 11 and in Para. 16.
- II. Review and suggest desired changes in Section II (Paras. 17-21) of NIE 11-8-54. In particular: Is it possible to separate out from the whole range of indicators derived from a process of full mobilization any which enable intelligence to give warning of intent to attack as distinguished from warning merely of increased readiness to attack? If so, what are such indicators?

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Is it possible that by mid-1958 the over-all degree of Soviet war-readiness will have increased to such an extent that substantially less than six months prior preparations would be required? Do we agree with the UK estimate that "full military mobilization" could begin as late as D-42 days?

III. ATTACK ON WESTERN EUROPE WITHOUT MAJOR REINFORCEMENT  
(NIE 11-8-54, Paras. 24-27)

A. What would be the effect on the minimum preparations the USSR would have to take, on indicators received, and therefore on the probable degree of warning of the following developments, which are likely to occur in the 1955-1958 period?

1. The appearance of West German forces of the scheduled size?
2. Changes in offensive and defensive deployment and tactics in connection with the tactical use of nuclear weapons?

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- B. To what extent could deception measures impair the significance and reliability of indicators and thus reduce the degree of warning received? At what time of year would Soviet capabilities for deception be greatest?
- C. What are the prospects for detecting advance Soviet naval preparations (both submarine and surface craft) if the USSR chose to launch a naval offensive as part of its initial campaigns (see Para. 26 of NIE 11-8-54)?

IV. INITIAL ATTACKS ON US AND KEY OVERSEAS INSTALLATIONS ONLY  
(NIE 11-8-54, Paras. 28-35)

- A. If the USSR were to exercise the capabilities for air attack on the US and key overseas installations to be given in NIE 11-7-55, what would be the minimum preparations, the kinds of indicators, and the probable degree of warning of:
1. Maximum scale of attack of US and key overseas bases with first priority on US: (a) in mid-1955;  
(b) in mid-1958;

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2. Maximum scale of attack on US and key overseas bases with first priority on overseas bases:  
(a) in mid-1955; (b) in mid-1958;
  3. Sneak attack with maximum surprise and first priority on US: (a) in mid-1955; (b) in mid-1958;
  4. Sneak attack with maximum surprise and first priority on overseas bases: (a) in mid-1955;  
(b) in mid-1958; and
  5. Most likely scale of attack balancing all factors involved in a Soviet decision to engage in general war: (a) in mid-1955; (b) in mid-1958.
- B. In particular, what would be the intensity (i.e., frequency and weight) of indicators and the time periods affecting such preparations as redeployment of units, logistic build-ups, movement of nuclear weapons, final training activity, preparations to meet retaliatory attacks on strategic air installations? What would be the precise time factors affecting deployment of aircraft to staging bases?

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- C. How will the USSR's capability for deception develop through the period to 1958, especially if long overseas training flights become routine, if staging bases are in regular use, or if the latter become less essential as heavy bombers capable of operating from interior bases come into use?
- D. What indicators will be derived if the USSR uses submarines for various scales of attack against hostile carrier forces, against overseas installations and against the continental US?

Y. WARNING FROM SOVIET PREPARATIONS TO RECEIVE RETALIATORY ATTACKS

Carefully review Paragraph 36 of NIE 11-8-54. It would be desirable, if possible, to expand the discussion of (a) the likelihood of Soviet advance preparations of various kinds to receive retaliatory attacks; (b) the kinds of indicators derived from such activities and the degree of warning they might provide.

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VI. DEVELOPMENT OF THE US WARNING CAPABILITY

- A. Are there likely over the period of this estimate to be major improvements, resulting from new sources or techniques, in the capability of US intelligence to give warning? In particular, will there be any gain in the warning capability toward more precise and specific degrees of warning as distinguished from generalized warning? Are factors likely to appear which will impair the warning capability during the period of this estimate? What specific measures, if any, would materially increase the likelihood of warning?
- B. To what extent during this period will the US be likely to benefit from new warning capabilities developed by allied or friendly states (e.g., radar in Finland)?

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